

B. Hon. B.

THE
BLESSEDNESS
of Departed
SAINTS

In their immediate enjoyment
of GOD in glorie.

*Propounded and improved in a Funeral-Sermon,
upon Revel. 14. 13. March 3. 1651.
at the funeral of M. G. wife of C.C. Esq.*

By JOSEPH ROWE, Minister of the Gospel, and
Pastor of *Buckland-monachorum* in Devon.

2. COR. 5. 1.

We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

L O N D O N,
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Courteous READER,

THe plain Meditations here-
unto annexed, conceived at
first for the Pulpit, & from
thence delivered at the Funeral of a
gracious * Gentlewoman to the ears *M.C. Wife*
of a few, are now [providence so *to E. C.*
disposing] made publick, and in the *Esquire.*
same Attire presented to the eyes of
many.

This short address humbly be-
speaks thy kind acceptance of them,
and a lodging for them in the trea-
surie of thy heart: The common
good of souls is [I assure thee] the
great design of the Author , and of
the present undertaking. And if
A 2 God

TO the READER.

God be pleased to witness to his own precious Truth, managed in this little discourse, and by it convey light to any soul, I shall account myself a rich gainer by this adventure, whatsoever hazards I run in it.

My prayer is; that GOD WHO QUICKENETH THE DEAD, would put life into these dead papers, and by his own holy SPIRIT lead into the ways of blessedness they direct unto; and in the end of thy earthly pilgrimage crown thee with blessedness in the kingdom of glorie. This is the earnest desire of him who is,

March 15.
1653.

Thine to love and serve in

the Ministerie of the Gospel,

JOSEPH ROWE.



THE
BLESSEDNESS

Of Departed

SAINTS,

In their immediate enjoyment of
GOD in Glorie.

REVEL. Chap. 14. Vers. 13. part of it.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

Here is controversie amongst *Interpreters* concerning the coherence and dependancy of this verse. *The context cleared.*
Most refer it to the foregoing, * *Some* few to the following verses, but it is not much material how we state the relation of the words, so we carefully inquire into, and retain their sense, and meaning. * *Mede*
Cl. Apocalipt.

The *scope*, and *drift* of the *Text* is, to comfort the Saints against the fear of death whether *natural*, or *violent*. The *scope* of the *Text* proposed.
The *consolation* held forth in it, is drawn from the *happiness* that departed Saints enjoy upon the very *moment* of their dissolution. And herein the Lord deals like, a wise *Physician*, who applieth

The blessedness of

applieth cordials, to revive, and keep up the spirit of his fainting Patients. So doth our gracious God ! He here tenders a rich, and Sovereign Cordial, to revive, and heighten fearfull, and dejected Souls against the dreadfull threatnings of the evil day. Assuring them by a voice from heaven, uttered by the spirit of truth, that the greatest evils, yea death it self, do but make way for the speedier passage of Saints to eternal felicity.

Though believers die either in, or for the Lord, yet herein they are blessed, and that instantly upon their death, in resting from their labours, and in receiving the reward of their works. *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from hence forth, &c.*

Division of
Text

In the words are two general parts.

First *A Point propounded*; [*Blessed are the dead which &c.*

Secondly, *A proof fit exhibited*, and laid forth [*yea saith the spirit that they &c.*]

First Gen.
subdivided

In the former of these are three Circumstances.

First, *A priviledge, Blessedness* [*Blessed.*]

Secondly, *the persons to whom it belongs*; *The dead which die in the Lord.*

Thirdly, *the time when this glorious Priviledge comes to be enjoyed.* This is carried under those expressions [*from henceforth*] *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.*

Second General
subdivided

In the second General are two Particulars.

1. *The Person asserting the former Truth*; *The spirit.*

2. *The Reasons alledged for confirmation of the Truth*, and they are two.

The first is taken from the *rest* of departed Saints. They are blessed that dye in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours; that is because they rest from their labours *in a* that being put for *uti* because.

* *Parvus in locum.*

* *Piscator,*
Napier, Junius, Bul-
linger Dio-
dani, Leigh,
Gerhard.

The second reason is grounded upon their reward. Their works, that is, by a *Metonymie* the * reward of their works do follow them.

Both reasons (as *Parvus* observes) are taken from *racers* who

who having attained the mark, enjoy a twofold benefit, *rest*, and *reward*.

These Particulars being too many to be all dispatched at this time, the first General shall (by Gods permission) be the boundary of my speech, and your attention.

Μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀποθνῄσκοντες ἀπ' ἡρ.

Blessed are the dead dying, or which dye in the Lord from henceforth.

I shall first explain the *terms* that are shadowed with any difficulty, and next give out such *Doctrines* as may warrantably be erected upon this Scripture-foundation. That which is to be handled by way of explication is.

First the meaning of the word [*Blessed*.]

Secondly, who they are, that are here said to [*die in the Lord*.]

Thirdly, what time is especially intended by these particular of time [*From henceforth*.]

We begin to open the priviledge held forth under the term [*Blessed*] and to shew what is meant by it.

There is (as *Divines* distinguish) A 3 fold *Blessedness*.

what is meant by term [*blef- sed*]

1. *Natura of nature*! This *Adam* had during the short time of his abode in Paradise.

2. *Gratia of grace*! Thus the *Saints* are happy even in this life. This *blessedness* our *Saviour* speaks of in that excellent Sermon of his upon the Mount, *Matth. 5. Chap. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. verses*. This is called most often by *Polemick* Authours, *Beatitudo via*, the *blessedness of the way*.

3. *Gloria of glory*! This appertains only to departed *Saints*, and is in other terms called, *beatitudo patria*, the *blessedness of the countrey*. This again is 2 fold.

Inchoata, *inchoate*, or *initial*. This is [that blessedness, which is bestowed upon the *soul* immediately upon its separation from the body; and of this blessedness is our *Text* to be understood. Or,

Consummata, *consummated*, and *perfect*, which is that high and eminent degree of blessedness, and glory, which is to be

given forth to the body, and soul at the last day. The next expression to be opened is!

2. *Difficulty opened who they are that die in the Lord.*

Who they are, that are here said [*To die in the Lord?*]

The greek is *ἐν κυρίῳ* in *Rigin* *ἐν κυρίῳ*
we render it, *The dead which die in the Lord.*

1. There is a double exposition given of this clause! Some interpret, dying *in the Lord*, of dying *for the Lord*, that is, *for the Lords sake*, or *for the Lords cause*. Thus the *Martyrs*, who suffered death, for the maintenance of the Lords truth, *died in the Lord*. This interpretation is favoured by many * *Pro-*

* Bez.: Pif.
c. 107 Mece
in loc.

* Ribera in
loc.

testant, and by some * *Popish expositors*. And to say truth, The words *ἐν κυρίῳ* are in some few Scriptures to be thus expounded. That place is plain for this, *Ephes. 4. 1. I Paul a Prisoner ἐν κυρίῳ* we English it [*of the Lord*] but according to the Letter of the Greek 'tis [*in the Lord*] That is,

* Chrysost.
Musculus.
Diodat.
in locum.

* Divines of
the Assembly
in their notes
upon the
place.

Pareus in
Rom. 16.
vers. 2. &
12.

* Bullinger
Pareus Ger-
hard Synod.
Annot. in
locum.

* *For the Lord* according to the *Hebrew* manner of speaking. Thus * some also interpret that place, *Rom. 16. 2. Receive Phebe our sister ἐν κυρίῳ*, *in the Lord*, that is, *for the Lords sake*. So *verse 12. Persis* is said to have laboured much *ἐν κυρίῳ*, *in the Lord*, that is *for the Lord*. And thus you have an account of the first exposition of these words [*dying in the Lord*] restraining them to the *Martyrs* dying for the Lord.

2. There is another interpretation of a greater latitude, & extension, given forth by several eminent *Divines*, who expound this clause (*which die in the Lord* as of the *Martyrs* dying for *Christ*, so of all *Believers* also, dying in the faith of *Christ*).

This sence I prefer, as being most genuine and proper to the present Scripture. For! (as *One* well observes) *S. John* doth not here speak of those sad times of *Antichrist*, when he raged in full Fury against the *Saints*, but of the more happy age of reformation, when the power of *Antichrist* shall in many places be broken, and the *Martyrdoms* of the *Saints*, not be so frequent as before. So that there is no reason why *dying in the Lord* should be limited to the *Martyrs*, when

when it may be enlarged to all *believers*, who do as live, so *die in the Lord*. The Scripture dialect much favours this interpretation. Some of the family of *Narcissus*, [professing the faith of the Lord] are *Rom. 16. 14.* Said to be *in the Lord*. Again, to live, and persevere in the profession of the faith, is *John 15. 4.* called an *abiding in Christ*; and *Col. 2. 6.* a *walking in Christ*. And to die in the faith (whether by a natural, or violent death) is *1 Cor. 15. 18.* expressed under the terms of *sleeping in Christ*. And those who thus die, are *1 Thess. 4. 16.* expressly called, *the dead in Christ*. To close up all; to *die in the Lord*, is an expression answering to that of *dying in the faith*, *Heb. 11. 13.* Thus they do, who either *die for Christ*, as the *Martyrs*, or *in the faith of Christ*, as all *believers*, whether *Martyrs* or *Professors*. Nevertheless, that the *Martyrs* are chiefly meant by those that *die in the Lord*, I readily grant; but that they are onely meant I resolutely deny; All those, whosoever they are, that depart in the faith of the Lord, *die in the Lord*; and to these, as well as to the *Martyrs* doth the privilege of *blessedness* appertain.

The time specified for the obtainment of this *blessedness* comes now to be opened. This is held forth under the Greek particle, *Από*, we render it *From henceforth*.

There is great contention amongst the *Learned*, about this little word,

Their strife concerns;

First the *place and situation* of this particle.

Secondly, the *Syntax and Construction* of it.

Thirdly, the *genuine sense and signification* of the same.

As to the first:

The *vulgar Latine*, and *some others*, seat this word in the front of the following sentence; thus, *Amodo jam dicis spiritus* that is, *from henceforth now saith the Spirit*, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them. The learned *Divines*, employed in our last Translation of the *Bible*, have so pointed the verse, as that we may indifferently conjoin either

Diodat. in
locum.

Musculus in
1 Thess. 4.
16.

The third
particular
opened;

The time for
the obtain-
ment of bles-
sedness.

1. The situa-
tion of
Από.

The blessedness of

ther with the precedent, or subsequent words. But most *Greek copies*, yea all, (as *Pareus* asserts) that of *Montanus* onely excepted, and most *Translators* and *Interpreters*, fix *Ἀνάψι* in the rear, as the concluding term in this proposition, [*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.*] And so I shall look upon it in the present discourse.

Touching the construction of the word *Ἀνάψι*.

R. Za in loc.

* *Heinsius*
exercit. fact.
in cap. 26.
Matth. &
vers. 64.

* *Brightman*
& *Piscar.*
in locum.

Some joyn it with *μακάριοι* *blessed!* As thus, *Blessed from henceforth are the dead.* A skilfull **Crisick* passeth his judgement upon this; as seeming the best construction of the word, although he acknowledge it may profitably be referred to the last clause. **Others* construe it with *ἀποθνῄσκειν* *die*, to which word 'tis (as they say) purposely subjoyned. And this construction, is in my apprehension, as more clear, and Grammatical than the former; so more serviceable for the discoverie of the mind of God in the present expression. The right meaning of which, is of most concernment; and that we are forthwith to inquire into.

There is a three-fold signification of this word *Ἀνάψι* given forth by the *Masters* of the *Greek* tongue, each of which, is taken up by some, or other of *Divines*, in their translations and commentaries upon the present Scripture.

1. The word is sometime used as a note of asseveration.

* *Heinsius*
in 26. Matt
ver. 64.

* *Heinsius* in his exercitations upon the *New Testament*, observes, that *λέγω Ἀνάψι* is with the *Greeks* as much as *ἀληθῶς λέγω* *verily, verily I say, or I speak most truly and faithfully.* And thus (as I take it) is the word rendered in a very antient *English translation*, which I have seen; wherein the *Text* is read after this manner, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; Even so saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours, &c.* Here the *Original words* *Ἀνάψι*, and *Ναὶ* are translated (I suppose) as an ingeminated asseveration by [*even so.*]

Vide Bud.
Lexic.
See those
Bibles with
notes.

2. Again, *Ἀνάψι*, signifieth *fully, or perfectly.* And in this sense is the word rendered by some *Latine Authors*, and in some *English Bibles*, in which the former part of our *Text* is thus read, *The dead in Christ are fully blessed.*

3. But

3. But most *Interpreters* conceive the particle *'Andſt.* to be in this place an *Adverb of time*, representing to us, not the beginning of the Churches sufferings, as *Piſcator* conjectureth, but that very point of time, in which the *blessedness* here propounded to the *Saints* is to commence and begin. Howbeit, about the particularitie of time intended by this expression, there are varietie of conjectures amongst the *Learned*.

Some (as *Pareus* reports) make the time when this voice was proclaimed from heaven, to be the time for the beginning of this *blessedness*. And they give out their meaning to this effect; *From henceforth*, that is, from this very instant of time, in which this voice is heard from heaven, the dead in *Christ* are blessed. But this interpretation cannot be admitted, because it seems to exclude from happiness all those that before this time died in the Lord, to whom, as well as to others, *blessedness* appertains. 1. Opinion.

Others adjudge the time of the Churches reformation, and deliverance by the three Angels, to be the time, in which the happiness promised in the Text, is to take its rise, and beginning. From henceforth that is (say these) from the time the everlasting Gospel began to be preached, *blessed are those that die in the Lord*. 2. Opinion.
Pareus. Di-
odat. in loc.

These that thus die (saith *Pareus*) not onely are, or shall be blessed, but the three Angels shall publish, and Preach the same, refuting the heathenish fiction of *purgatory*, *satisfactions* and *indulgences*. This exposition, although favoured by eminent *Authors*, seems not clear to me, but lieth open to many exceptions: and too much narroweth the mercy of God towards deceased *Saints*; for out of all doubt, they are happy, and blessed that died in the Lord in the sad times of the Churches deformation, as well as those that died since in the more lightsome times of reformation. Therefore I shall crave leave modestly to pass it over, without building upon it.

A Third sort referr the *Adverb of time* from henceforth, forward to the time of the last judgement, and make that the time for the beginning of the *blessedness* held forth in 3. Opinion.
Lyra in loc.
Bellarm.
Ribera, &c.

The blessedness of

* Bellarmi-
nus loco
prec. 17.

in the precious *Scripture*. This way go many *Papists* that so they may establish the tottering Doctrine of *Purgatory*. The great reason urged by * *Bellarmino*, and other *Papal writers* for this, is; because the last judgement is treated of throughout the Chapter. But this is most apparently untrue. The last judgement is onely (if at all) treated of in the last part of the Chapter: And begins to be spoken to, in the verse following my *Text*.

* vers. 12.
vers. 8.
* vers. 9. 10

In the former part of it, is a representation of several great things; as the promulgation of the * *everlasting Gospel*: the prediction of * *Babylons down fall*; The dreadful proclamation of indignation, and vengeance against the * *worshippers of the beast*. All which are to be transacted by the 3 *Angels* some considerable space of time, before the time of the last judgement. A late * *Interpreter* of our own nation, pleades much for this opinion: But his reasons have not strength enough to work up my faith to close with it, sith the voice from heaven (as is most evident) proclaimes, not that blessedness, that departed Saints shall enjoy hereafter; but the blessedness which for the present they are possessed of, and enjoy. It is not said *Blessed shall be the dead, but blessed are the dead which die in the Lord*. For this and other reasons, (too many to be now propounded) this interpretation is also to be rejected.

* Opinion.
* Beda Ger-
hard Btl-
linget in lo-
cum.

The 4. and last opinion is of * those, who make the particular time of every believers death, to be the very time intended by the spirit in these words *from henceforth*, for the Commencement of the blessedness of the departed Saints, proposed, and promised in this most sweet, and soul-comforting *Text*. *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth*, that is (say the *Authors* of this exposition) from the very instant of their death. Such as die in the Lord, upon the very moment of their dissolution enter into bliss. Upon the very instant of their death, their Souls enter into glory; and from thenceforth this their happiness takes its beginning, and arise. The * *Souls* of those that die in the Lord, are forth-

with

with without any delay, or interval of time, received of the Lord.

This *exposition* I incline to, and shall insist upon; as fitting well with the *Text*, and plain by many parallel *Scriptures*.

Thus I have at length waded through the difficulties of this *Text*. The doctrines come now to be observed: And two onely (of many that might be noted) I shall propose, and prosecute.

The first is implied, and is this!

True believers must submit to death as well as others.

Doctrines
1 Doct.

These are in the *Text* accounted amongst the number of mortal creatures, and as such who must one day go down to the dead.

The second is clear, and express, and gives forth the very Pith, and Marrow of the first General, and is to this effect.

True believers immediately upon death are called unto, and crowned with blessedness in the Kingdom of glory.

2 Doct.

They are blessed that die in the Lord from thenceforth, that is from the very instant of their departure.

I beseech you lengthen out your attention while I discourse briefly, and plainly upon both these Truths.

Of the first Doctrine in the first place.

True believers must submit to death as well as others.

First Doct.
banded

All that live must one day die, and meet together in the grave. This is the house appointed for all living Job. 30. 23.

The Patriarchs, and Prophets could not obtain a Protection against the arrests of death. Your Fathers where are they, and

the Prophets do they live for ever? Zech. 1. 5. No they did not. They are all laid in the dust. Abraham is dead, and the Pro-

phets are dead, Joh. 8. 52. Lazarus the friend of Christ, falleth asleep, that is, dieth, John 11. verses. 11, 14. * Sarah.

* Gen. 23. 2.

* Rachel; and other holy women that trusted in God, at last gave up the ghost, and died. Dorcas a Disciple, full of good

* Gen. 35. 18

works, and of alms-deeds, at length gave way to nature, falls sick,

The blessedness of

sick, and dieth, Aët. 9. 36, 37. Yea, Christ himself being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, Phil. 2. 8. There is a death due to every He
Mancheſter *or She that happens to be born. Yea, 'tis as natural (ſaith*
Contempt. *one) to die, as to be born.*

Death is called *Joſh. 23. 14. The way of all the earth.* All men and women, believers, and unbelievers, muſt walk in this path; *What man is he that liveth, and ſhall not ſee death? Pſal. 89. 48.*

Death is *via regia*, the King of heavens high-way to the other world. Thou ſhalt die (ſaid a *Philosopher* to a friend of his,) not becauſe thou art ſick, but becauſe thou liveſt.

It is the glorious priviledge of the Saints in *heaven* to die never; the dreadfull puniſhment of the damned in *hell* to die ever; the Law, Charter, or Cuſtom of men *on earth* to die once. The Saints themſelves are not able to chalenge an immunitie from death, but muſt, when their turn comes, give way to it as well as others. And that for theſe Reaſons:

First, becauſe of the decree of God omnipotent.

Gods Statute-Law of Death, reacheth all; good and bad, believers and unbelievers. It is the decree of the living God, that all men *muſt once die*, Heb. 9. 27. 'Tis the ſtanding Law of *heaven*, that all on *earth* muſt die. If any find exemption, as did *Enoch* and *Elias*, this comes to paſs through the ſingular diſpenſation of God the King of heaven: and doth not at all impeach the credit, truth, and authoritie of this general decree. The Statute is *regular*, that all muſt die; the diſpenſation *ſingular*, that ſome have not died.

Cajetan. in
9. Heb. 27.

Again, true Believers muſt ſubmit to death as well as others.

Secondly, by reaſon of *ſin inherent*. Believers have ſin in them as well as others, and by means of it come under the guilt of death as well as others. The bodies of believers are dead (that is ſubject to death) *ſi a morte*, becauſe of ſin, Rom. 8. 11. Death is the *brat* of ſin; & ſin is the parent, a *mother* of death. *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned, Rom. 5. 12.* ſin made way to death.

Finally,

Saints departed.

11

Finally, Believers die as well as others.

In regard of *matter constituent*: Their bodies are made up of perishing materials, as well as the bodies of others. The bodies of all, holy, and unholy are made of the same dust, and must alike in their several courses return to the dust from whence they were taken.

The Saints have in them rich treasures of grace; but their bodies which are the *cask* containing these treasures, are (as the Apostle stileth them) *earthen vessels*, or *vessels of shell*, as the Greek signifieth, 2 Cor. 4. 7. Vessels of earth, or shell are liable to breaking; so are the bodies of the Saints to perishing and death. The bodie in the 2 Cor. 5. 1. is called *σκήνη*, an *earthly house*. It is called a *house* because of its use and beautie; an *earthly house* because it is made of the earth, and must to the earth again. The bodies of Gods dearest servants are made of the same brittle metal, that the bodies of other men are, and therefore are alike liable to *breaking and death*.

Our own sad *experience* doth give abundant evidence to this *truth*. I pass therefore from the *confirmation*, to the *application* of it. And this is two fold.

First, for *commination* and *threatening* to all wicked men. *The Uses of*

Secondly, for *Admonition*, and *counsel* to the Saints. For the 1. Doct. the first.

This Truth sounds an *alarm of vengeance* against all wicked men living, and dying in sin. If Gods friends must die! let not his enemies dream of escaping death. *Use 1.*

They may with the rich fool in the Gospel, sing *lullaby* to their souls; but (except they repent) in a time ere they be aware, will death arrest them, and then without *bail*, or *mainprise* remain they must in the black prison of Hell. It can be no comfort to sinners, that the *righteous* die, as well as themselves, Although both die, yet death is not the same to both. Death is a *mercy* to believers, a *curse* to unbelievers. Death like the *Angel* plucks the Saints out of *Sodom*, and conducts them to *Zoar*, a City of refuge, but as a *Bayliff*, it draweth

Luke 12. 20.

draweth wicked men from this earth, to the dungeon of Hell. Death in a word brings Deliverance to the Saints; but destruction to all wicked, and impenitent sinners. The Saints *live* in death, but incorrigible sinners are destroyed, and *die* by it. *I will kill her children with death*, was Christ's threatening against the followers of Jezebel Rev. 2. 23. This will be the doom, and down-fall of all such as are workers of iniquity. The Lord give sinners hearts to consider this, before the warrants of death be issued out against them.

2 use.

Secondly, this truth holds forth advice to you that are the friends of Jesus Christ and profess faith in him. This concerns 3. duties.

Duty 1.

The first is. *Timely preparation for death*. You must die, as well as others: learn, I beseech you, to prepare for death, that ye may be happy in, and after death. To labour not to die (saith one) is to labour in vain! They onely are happy that think of death, and prepare for it in time of life. The end of this life, is no other than the beginning of sorrows to such as are unprepared. Oh let me prevail with you, to fit your selves for your journey towards your long-home. The Prophet Esay adviseth Hezekiah to set his house in order, because he should die, and not live. You must one day die, and not live: be advised to set your estates, your families, above all your selves in order, that so ye may finde mercy in the day of death.

Isa. 38. 7.

In order to the better discharge of this duty, Be ye pleased to observe these following directions.

Directions
in reference
to preparation
for
death.

Make it your daily practise more, and more to destroy sin in your mortal bodies. If ye wil. live, when you die; you must die to sin while you live. He that dieth in his sins without repentance, shall to his eternal wo, ever finde sin living in himself, Prepare therefore every day, for your dying day, by dying unto sin: this is the way to live after death. *If ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the spirit mortifie the deeds of the bodie ye shall live*, Rom. 8. 13. Ye shall live, (destroying sin) both before, and after death; before death,

death, the life of grace; after death, the life of glorie. This daily preparation for death, was the *Apostles* daily practice, 1. Cor. 15. 31. *I die daily*, saith he. That is, as death hangs over my head continually, so I daily prepare for it. * *Diodat. in locum.*

Secondly, *Lay up treasures for your selves in heaven every day while you are upon earth.* This is as your dutie, so your crown. A holy life is the best preparation for death. If you build upon *Christ the rock*, the storms of sickness, and death shall do you no annoyance. Live to Christ now, and he will receive you in death; yea ye shall live with him after death. *He will save the souls of his servants*, Psal. 34. 22. Living religiously, you may die comfortably. *The righteous hath hope in his death*, Prov. 14. 32.

Thirdly, *Meditate frequently upon death.* Frequent acquaintance with death, takes away the bitterness of death, and fits a man the better to undergo it. *As the flight of a bird is directed by her train; and as the course of a ship is steered by the helm; so (to use a common and familiar comparison) is the life of Christians rightly ordered by a daily consideration of their latter end.* It is reported in Histories of *Philostates*, that he lived seven years in his Tomb, that so he might be thoroughly acquainted with it. The *all-wise* God, *Dent.* 32. 29. commends the serious contemplation of our latter end, as an act of spiritual wisdom. *Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, That they would consider their latter end.* Thus of the first dutie. I can but hint at the following duties. The next of which is, *A carefull using of religious kindred and acquaintance to the best advantage.* They shall not alway remain with you in this earth; while you enjoy their company improve it to the utmost, Religious and godly persons are as *lights in the world*, Phil. 2. 15. While we enjoy this light, it is our dutie to work by it. The light of their company and counsel, will shine upon us but a while: Therefore (as our *Saviour* adviseth in reference to himself and Gospel, *John* 12. 35.) *While we have the light, we should walk in it.* Godly persons are but lent us for a time: Oh let us receive what good we may from them before

The blessednes of

the Lord call them hence to himself by death. It will be the condemnation of many wicked ones, that they have godly friends and make no good use of them.

The last dutie commended to the Saints from the former Doctrine is :

Duty 3.

Cheerfulness, and resolution, under the assaults of, death the King of fears.

When we are to encounter with death, let us consider, we are to do no other, than what the Saints have undergone before us. *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, yea, all the holy men, and women that trusted in God, (our *Saviour* himself not excepted) have encountered with this enemy. We should (methinks) boldly look death in the face, sith so many of Gods *Worthies* have skirmished with it, and so made way to themselves for an immediate passage unto glory. And this brings me to the last and principal Point of the Text.

Doctr. 2.

True believers, immediately upon death, are called unto, and crowned with blessedness in the kingdom of glorie.

The Saints, instantly, upon their leaving of the earth, go to live with God in heaven. Though they are not fully glorious, or so gloriously happy as they shall be when both bodie & soul shall shine with glorie, yet immediatly upon their respective deaths they enter into glory; and have such a measure of it given forth to their souls, as they in that condition are capable to receive. There is much in *Scripture* for the confirmation of this truth. I shall refer the quotations to, and draw them from several *Topick* places. And so The Doctrine may be confirmed;

1. Argument
of *Scripture*
to prove the
Doctrine.

First from *Scriptures* declaring the immediate reception of departed Saints into the kingdom of glorie. It is said of faithful *Abraham*, Gen. 25. 8. *That he gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered to his people.* As soon as he was dead, he was gathered to his people. This is spoken, not in regard of his bodie, he being buried where few, or none of his Countrey-

men

men, and kindred lay interred, but in regard of his *soul*; and the phrase intimates, that his soul straightway upon its coming forth of the bodie, was carried to that place of happiness, where his pious countrey-men and predecessors were before him. And this place is no other than *heaven*, which is the congregation-house for the receiving of the spirits of just men made perfect. We find this also affirmed of Isaac, that he died, and was gathered to his people, Gen. 35. 29. The same is said of Jacob, Gen. 49. 33. He gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered to his people. The meaning of these expressions is; that as soon as these holy men died, their souls went to the mansions of eternal felicitie, and to the companie of glorified Saints in heaven.

So much may evidently be concluded from the now recited texts, compared with *Matth. 8. 11.* where our Saviour saith, that many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Taking it for granted, that these Patriarchs were already in heaven.

And (to remove all scruples) this Christ spake, long before his death, and ascension into heaven, by which (as Popish sophisters imagin) he opened these everlasting doors, and made enterance for his Saints who were before shut out.

The Scriptures upon which they build this idle fancie, are wrested, and misapplied. These words of *Heb. 9. 8.* [The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was standing] are grossely mistaken. For 'tis not said (as one well observes) that the way to the holiest was closed, or shut up; but that which is affirmed is, that the way to the holiest, which is heaven, was not yet manifest while the first tabernacle was standing; that is, was not so clearly revealed, as it was afterward by the light of the Gospel. That of *S. John 3. 13.* makes nothing for it. The place cannot be interpreted so, as if no man ascended heaven before Christs ascension; the foregoing allegation from *S. Matthews Gospel*, and many other Scriptures plainly contradict it. We are there-

D. in Heb.
9. 8.

Calvin. in
locum.

Piscator ad
locum

* Cameron
in locum.

* P. scator
Diod. in
Lib. 16. 22.

* Rom. 4.
11.

* Peter
Matt. in 2.
reg. 2.

* Cameron.
Myloth in
locum

* Capel
Spicil. in
ecum.

fore to understand that verse, not in a *literal*, but in a *spiritual*, and *figurative* sense. By ascending up to heaven, is meant a pure knowledge, and a spiritual light of understanding in, and about the mysteries of God. To ascend heaven here, is with an understanding eye, to pry into the mysteries of heaven; and to be admitted as privie to the counsels of God.

Another wrested Scripture Heb. 11. 39. *These All having received a good report through faith received not the promise.* From hence it is (by some) inferred, that these worthies went not to heaven when they died. To this we say, that the present place, speaks not of the * condition of these Saints after death, but of somewhat concerning them before, and at the time of their death. They died and received not the promise; that is, the *great promise*, *Christ incarnate*, and the happy, and glorious estate of the Church under him. They had *Christ* only in promise, dying ere they received a real exhibition of this promise. They died in expectancy of *Christ* to come, whom we now enjoy in life, and death, as come. Thus you see, notwithstanding these cavils, the Patriarchs upon their deaths forthwith entered into glory. So did the poor *Lazar* also; He died, and forthwith upon his death, the *Angels* carried him into *Abrahams bosom*, Luke 16. 22. That is to the happy society, and fellowship of *Abraham*, and other * believers in the Kingdom of heaven. Although the body of this Saint had not a pompous funeral, as the rich mans had, yet his soul was attended by the glorious *Angels*, and by them instantly conveyed to the glory of heaven, represented under these tropical expressions τὸν Ἀβραάμ τοῦ Ἀβραάμ, *Abrahams bosom*. This happiness is represented by the *bosom of Abraham*, rather than of any other Saint; because he is the * *Father of all those that believe*: and the head as it were, of all those men, * whom God takes into covenant with himself, The phrase is borrowed, either from * *Marriners*, who carry their ships, out of the tempestuous Waves, into the good harbour, or quiet bosom of the sea: or from the * *custom of the Eastern Nations*, who at their banquets use to lean, or

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lie in each others bosom : or rather. *From the practise of tender parents*, hugging, and imbracing their little ones into their bosoms. Even so the souls of the Saints immediately upon death, are carried by the *Angels*, who are Gods Pilots, from the troublefom sea of this world, to rest and safety in the harbour of heaven; and to sit down, as at a banquet, with *Abraham*, and other believers in that glorious place; where they shall be honoured, not onely with the fellowship, and imbraces of the Saints, but of God himself their tender Father, *in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for ever more.* * Psal. 16.

Thus was it with *Lazarus*; and thus shall it be with all the Saints; the *ending* of this life, will be to them, the *beginning* of happiness in the next. When their faith ends, as it doth when this life ends, *then shall they receive the salvation of their souls*, 1 Pet. 1. 9. There is a passage in the 12 of Eccles. 7. fully declaring the condition of souls in, and after death: and I hope I may (without A rigid censure) place it, under this Topick place. The words are these; *Then* (meaning the time of death) *shall the dust return to the earth, as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.* As certainly, as the dust, that is the body, goeth down to the dust; so certainly the spirit that is the soul goeth up unto God to be judged, and to receive Either of his justice, in a sentence of immediate condemnation, or of his mercy in an instantly beginning, and everlasting salvation. The soul without delay, upon its separation from the body repairs to God, to receive according to her demerits, either chains and torments in hell the prison of disobedient spirits; or freedom, and blessedness in heaven, the mansion of glory. And this is the first Scripture Argument.

Secondly, the truth of the former Doctrine may be demonstrated, from such Text of holy Writ, as hold forth, the knowledge, and faith of Gods people, in, and about their immediate happiness after death, and their desires to depart hence, that so they may be with *Christ*, in happiness, and glory. We may read the knowledge, and faith of the Saints

The second Argument of Scripture to prove the former Doctrine.

* Calvinus
in locum.

about this truth, in that excellent portion of Scripture, 2 Cor. 5. 1. *We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* In this verse our * body is compared to a tent, or tabernacle, the glory of heaven to an eternal house. When the soul is called away from sojourning in the tabernacle of the body, she instantly goeth to dwell in that eternal house of glory above. This the *Apostle*, and other of the Lords people knew, and believingly received as an undoubted truth. And upon this account is it, that death hath been so earnestly desired by them. *I have a desire* (said S. Paul) *to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better,* Phil. 1. 23. Yea, this is the desire of all the Saints, 2 Cor. 5. 8. *We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* The souls of the Saints straightway upon death, enter into the society and fellowship of Christ in glory. As soon as they depart hence, they go to Christ; and are present with him instantly upon their absence from the body. Now the knowledge and faith of the Lords people concerning this, was it, that made them so desirous of death. Did their souls die, or sleep, or pass through the penances of Purgatory, before they went up to heaven, death were not so desirable, as the Saints, guided by the unerring spirit, know it to be: neither yet should they be with Christ upon death, which they fully know, and firmly believed, but in an estate of further distance from Christ, then whilst they were here upon earth, which is expressly contradictory to the word of Truth.

The third
Scripture-
Argument
for probati-
on of the
Doctrine

The last Scripture-Argument, I shall urge for confirmation of the former Truth, is deduced from Scriptures representing promises from God to the Saints of immediate entrance into glory, upon their respective dissolutions; and the prayers of dying Saints, that God would (according To his promise) receive up their souls to himself in glory. We may see these promises in the following quotations. The first is *Esay* 57. 2. *He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds each one walking*

walking in his uprightness. In these words we have a gracious promise made out to all those that walk uprightly before God, that upon their deaths they shall enter into peace, and rest in their beds. These expressions [*He shall enter into peace*] import and hold forth that happiness, which upon death shall be bestowed upon the souls of the upright, in their immediate enjoyment of God in glory; the last clause [*they shall rest in their beds*] sheweth, that as the * souls of the Saints go unto a place of rest, & bliss, so their bodies are laid to rest in the grave, as in a bed or bed-chamber until the general resurrection.

* Synod
Annot. in
locum.

The other quotation is Luke 23. 43. *To day* (said Christ to the penitent thief) *thou shalt be with me in paradise*. That is, this very day in thy soul, thou shalt be with me in Paradise, Christ means not the earthly Paradise, for that is supposed destroyed by the flood; neither can the soul which is spiritual, be affected with earthly delights; but the celestial Paradise, which is no other than heaven, as is plain by 2 Cor. 12. 2, 4. verses. The Greek word *παράδεισος*, * signifieth a most pleasant garden, set forth with fruitfull trees of all sorts. And by a * figure taken from the garden where Adam was put, when he was in the state of innocency, is here used, as elsewhere in * Scripture, to signifie The place of eternal happiness. So that in this scripture, there is as a promise of heaven made to the penitent thief; so also, a present enjoyment of it, upon that very day of his death. And this promise (as * Origen notes) concerns not him onely but all the Saints of God.

* Psal. lxx.
Græcolat.
* Diodati in
23 Luke 43.

* Revel. 2.
7.

Origen. hom.
15. in Gen.

The shift of *Smalcins*, and other *Hereticks* to evade the force of this Scripture is weak, and absurde. They say that [*σήμερον* to day] hath dependance upon the former words, and relates to the instant in which the promise was made, and not to the future in which it was to be performed. And they thus read and paraphrase the verse. *And Jesus said unto him; verily I say unto thee to day, [that is, I now tell thee,] thou shalt be with me in Paradise, [to wit after the time of the last judgement. But this gloss of theirs, renders Christs answer sapless, and unsavoury; fathers bat-*

tology

* John 7. 46 *etology* upon him, the infinite wise Saviour of the world, who *spake as never man spake*; and is a gross corruption of the sacred Text.

The Greek and Syriack copies read, and render it otherwise; referring [*αὔριον, to day*] to the latter words, as representing the time in which the promise of being with Christ in Paradise, was to be made good to this penitent Thief. The [*to day*] of the Lord Jesus in this verse, answers to the [*when*] of the thief in the former verse; and sheweth, that the time when Christ would remember him, should be that very day. Thus (notwithstanding the exceptions of *adversaries*) this promise of Christ to the repenting thief, is a full, and convincing proof, for the passage of gracious souls unto glorie, and that, immediately upon their separation from the bodie. Finally, upon this account is it, that dying Saints have by prayer commended their *fleeting* souls to the mercie of God. Thus did the blessed Martyr Stephen, Lord Jesus (said he) *receive my spirit*, Act. 7. 59. So did our Saviour; *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*, Luke 23. 46. These petitions shew plainly, that God doth take care of the souls of his Saints in death, & forthwith upon death receives them unto himself in glorie.

These uses of
the Doctrine

This Truth is also, very profitable in application, and may serve;

1. For Refutation.

2. For Exhortation.

Use 1.

The present Truth speaks to the refutation, and overthrow of two *soul-sadning* opinions. The one, an opinion of the *Papists*. The other, of *Mortalists*, and *Soul-sleepers*, a loose sect among our selves.

The first opinion refuted by this Truth is, of the *Papists*, who *dream of a Purgatorie*, or place in which, (they say) *some of those that die in the Lord, are for a time to be purged, and punished before they arrive to the blessedness of glorie*.

This opinion is a meer *fancie* and *device* of giddie brains; having not the least countenance from the Word of God, but directly opposing it; terrifying the Saints with anguish and pains,

pains, even horrible and *hellish*; when the spirit promifeth nothing but *bleffedness* and *rest* in the kingdom of heaven, and that, as it is in the text, from *henceforth* after death, *that is*, instantly upon their departure. *Purgatorie* (as one well) is a fiction invented purposely to make the Popes Kitchin smoke. And is an invention not known to the Greek Church for the space of 1500 years after Christ, and but of late known to the *Latine* Church. We read in Scripture as of two sorts of persons, good and bad; so of two places onely for the receiving of these after death. *Wicked men die, and immediately go down to hell; the righteous die, and straightway ascend heaven.* For a third place, *God* made none, the *Scriptures* mention none, the *Fathers* believed none, acknowledging onely two places heaven and hell for the receiving of souls after death.

The second opinion refuted by the present Doctrine, is of some amongst our selves; who say, *the souls of Saints, do not upon death partake of glorie in heaven, but either die, or sleep untill the time of the resurrection.* *Augustine* in his book of *heresies*, calleth the authors of this wicked, and drowsie opinion *Arabici*, from the place of their first original, and abode. The confirmation of the former Truth, is a sufficient *confutation* of this monstrous error. The souls of the Saints immediately upon their separation, are called to the enjoyment of *bleffedness* in heaven; therefore they neither die, nor sleep. If *separate souls* were either dead, or asleep, they could not be *happie*, and *bleffed*: Sith according to the *maxim* in the *Schools*; *all bleffedness consists in action.*

Death may kill the bodie, but it cannot kill the soul. The soul is by the *immortal God* honoured with lastingness, and immortalitie. Though the soul had a time in which it began to live, yet there is no time, in which it shall *die*. Yea, let me say, that the judgement of eternal death upon unbelieving souls, doth not consist in a privation of life, but of *happiness*, and *glorie*. Eternal death is not an annihilation of being to wicked souls, or a privation of life in them, but an infliction of everlasting torments upon them. Everlasting death is in-

The blessedness of

afflicted upon the souls of sinners, not by killing, or annihilating their souls, but by tormenting them with infernal punishments. The unbelieving soul (to use an expression of *Augustines*) is *immortal unto death*. Ever dying, and yet never dead, under the deadly strokes of the second death. As for the believing soul, she is *immortal unto life*; and lives in, and after death. Hence is it, that God (*who is not the God of the dead, but of the living*) is said to be the God of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*: *Matth. 22. 32.* *Abraham* then is alive, *Isaac* is alive, and *Jacob* is alive; but how? Not in their bodies, but in their souls. Their bodies were long since dead, and perished; but their souls live in glorie. Hence again is it, that all dead Saints are said to *live to God*, *Luke 20. 38.* Even because they live with God in their spirits, although they are dead in respect of their bodies, or in the account of the world. Furthermore, the appellations by which the death of the Saints is described, are plain discoveries of the life, and immortalitie of the soul. Holy *Job* calls his death a *change*, chap. 14. 14. Death is not to the Saints, an absolute privation of life, but onely a *change*, or *mutation*, of place and condition. The bodie goeth to rest in the grave; the soul leaves the earth, and goes to heaven. Aged *Simeon* speaking of his death, calls it a *departure*, or a *setting at liberty*, as the *Greek* signifies. The soul is not destroyed by death, but onely set at *libertie* from the prison of the bodie; and obtains a *let-pass* to depart from the miseries of the earth, to the joys above. The Apostle *Peter* calleth death, a *laying down of his tabernacle*, *2 Pet. 2. 14.* The *Metaphor* is taken from *Shepherds*; and the *Apostle* by it signifieth; that, as shepherds, when they leave their tents, do go home to their houses; so we that are the Lords people, when by death, the tabernacles of our bodys are taken down, do in our souls depart hence, to dwell in houses not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens. The soul then doth not die, but live in, and after death. Touching the sleeping of the soul, which some affirm, and hold forth to the world, chiefly upon this pretext, because death is in Scripture resembled to sleep, and vnder that notion commended to publick

Departed Saints.

publick view, give me leave, to drop a word or two.

Death indeed is a kind of *sleep*; and is often in Scripture expressed by that *sweet*, and *lovely* name. But we are to know, that death is so called, not in reference to the *soul*, as if it slept in the bodie, as *some* dream; or were cast into a dead sleep being separated from the bodie, as *others* imagine; but wholly in regard of the *bodie*, which by death is eased of all its pain, and travail under the sun. In *Rev.* 6. 9, 10, 11. The *life*, *actions*, and *glorie* of sanctified souls in the state of *separation* are *visionally* represented to *S. John*; The words are these, *I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, & for the testimonie which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth. And white robes were given unto every one of them.* This Scripture holds forth to our purpose.

1. That the souls of Saints, in the state of separation, are not dead, but alive; not asleep, but waking, and watchfull They *cry* unto God against the wicked; not for any particular vengeance, but of zeal to Gods justice, and of desire of the full coming of his kingdome, in the total ruin of the wicked, and in the last and final judgement. 2. This Scripture imports, that the separate souls of Saints are not in Purgatorie, but in heaven. They are *under the altar*; that is, they are in the presence, and under the protection of *Christ*, who is our altar. Lastly, it sheweth, that these souls partave of Christs glorie. They have *white robes* given to them; and this is an emblem of that glorie, wherewith they are dignified. Thus of the first use.

In the next place this *truth* is profitable for *exhortation*, and that to several *Gospel-duties*; I can (through the want of time) onely touch upon them.

1. The first duty is; *A willingness to die when God calls to it.* Death makes way for life, and glory. To die once well, is to live eternally. Immediately after our dissolutions we go to *Christ, which is best of all.* This (me thinks) should sweeten

The blessedness of

the bitterness of death, and make the thoughts of it pleasing, and delightful. The gain of death, hath made many of Gods people, not onely willing to die, but also earnestly desirous of its instant approach. The Apostle Paul had an earnest desire to be dissolved. He did not onely desire to die, but desired it, with A vehement affection, as Some give out the sence of the Greek tearms, Phil. 1. 23. And that which heightened, and inflamed his desire was, the glory, he knew, would attend him, immediately upon his dissolution. He desired to be dissolved, that so he might be with Christ which is *πολλὸν ὑπερ* much much better, or farr much better. Meditate I beseech you upon the gain of death; and by this work up your spirits to a willingness for death, when God summons to it. 'Tis one part of dying well, to die willingly.

Secondly, learn hence, So to dispose of your selves in life, as that ye may die in the faith, and fear of the Lord. This is the way to be happy after death. A sun-shine day may be closed up with a stormy evening; but a gracious life shall never end in an evil, and unhappy death. Such as the premises in life are, such will the conclusion in death alway be. * Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace. On the contrary; although death be gain to the Saints, yet it is a plague of plagues to the wicked. They that die in sin, shall die eternally. The wicked [that is such as live, and die thus] shall be turned into hell, Psal. 9. 17. You must make it your business to live, and die to the Lord, if you desire to be blessed after death. Blessed are they, all they, and onely they that die in the Lord.

3. For a conclusion of all; Do believers enter into glory, immediately upon death? Let us not mourn immoderately for our departed Friends, who are dead in the Lord. They are now, with the Lord, they now rest from their labours; and have received in part the reward of their works. Oh farr be it from us to mourn excessively, sith these friends of ours whom we bemoane, have gained so exceedingly by their departure from us. We should not so much mourn over the bodies of the

Saints,

departed Saints.

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Saints, because their souls have left them, as over the souls of sinners, because God hath forsaken them. Excessive mourning for the dead is a practise most unbeseeming those that profess the name of *Christ*. It may be tolerable in Heathens, that have no hope: but 'tis damnable in believing Christians. *I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.* 1 *Thess.* 4. 13. It is a very great sin in those that believe the *rest*; and *resurrection* of departed Saints, immoderately to lament for those, that are gone to their rest: It is A *heathenish* practise, and calls for detestation, not imitation. *Abraham* *Gen.* 23. 4. Treats with the sons of *Herb* for a burying place, that so he might bury his wife *Sarah* out of his sight. He chose rather to forget her, then forget himself by a lavish, and over-abounding sorrow. And it is observable that our *Saviour Christ* when he came to the *Rulers* house *Matth.* 9. 23. Reprehends smartly the *musicians*, because (according to the ** custom* of these times) they played their sad tunes to increase sorrow, whereas they should rather have mitigated, and allayed it. Nature is of it self too prone to exceed the bounds of sobriety.

I beseech you all that hear me now; but all you more especially, that sympathize in the sorrow of this day through the death of our departed Sister, that ye mitigate, and moderate your sorrow, and grief, Do you bound, and limit it, least it hurt your selves, dishonour God, bring the profession of the gospel into contempt. You have all lost, (I know) by this death-stroke; Oh know, know; 1 That God is able to repay your losses, and will do so if you wait upon him. *None of them that trust in him shall be desolate,* *Psal.* 34. 22. Secondly It was the will of the Lord to have it thus, and you should willingly submit to it. It is the Lord (said old *Eli*) let him do what seemeth him good 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. Thirdly comfort your selves with this: her gain is infinitely beyond your loss. She (we hope) is gone from earth, to heaven; from a vale of misery, to a hill of joy; from the company of us weak, and sinfull men, to an innumerable company of *Angels*; to the general assembly, and

* 2 *Cerm.*
34 25.
J. 5. 17

1 *Thess.* 4.
18.

The blessedness of, &c.

Church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the Mediatour of the new covenant, Heb. 12. 22. In a word she is gone, from the Church militant, to the Church triumphant; from sojourning here in Gods tabernacle, To dwell upon his holy hill; from labouring here in the kingdom of grace, to rest; and blessedness in the Kingdom of glory. For this rest and blessedness, O blessed Father, fit, and prepare us To this rest, and blessedness O blessed Jesus, lead, and direct us: Of this rest, and blessedness: O blessed Spirit, certifie, and assure us; and with this rest, and blessedness, O most blessed God, who art three in person, and but one in essence, in thy due time crown, and comfort us, even for thy mercy sake. Amen. Amen.

FINIS.



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